

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending. Claims 3 and 5 have been amended to overcome the 35 USC 112 rejection, and not to overcome the prior art. No new matter is presented.

Applicants thank the Examiner for conducting an interview on July 26, 2005. During the interview, the Examiner explained the 35 USC 112 rejection and agreed that Applicants' proposed claim amendments would overcome said rejection.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 9-22 are allowed.

Claims 3-4 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. The rejection is respectfully overcome in view of the foregoing claim amendments.

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. The rejection is respectfully traversed. The rejection is respectfully overcome in view of the foregoing claim amendments.

Claims 1, 2 and 6 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ekawa, U.S. Patent 6,853,661 in view of Serreze, U.S. Patent 5,222,090 and further in view of Hara, U.S. Patent 4,794,611. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit that Ekawa is not a valid reference under 35 USC 103(a). The filing date of Ekawa is February 14, 2003. The foreign priority dates claimed in this application are July 1 and July 18, 2002, which are before the publication date of the cited reference. Applicant hereby submits a verified translation of the Japanese Application 2002-209795 filed July 18, 2002, to perfect the claim for foreign priority. Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 7 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ekawa in view of Serreze and further in view of Hara and Kuroda, U.S. Patent 5,313,073. In view of the foregoing, Applicants request that this rejection also be withdrawn.

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ekawa in view of Serreze and further in view of Hara and Behfar-Rad, U.S. Patent 5,075,743. In view of the foregoing, Applicants request that this rejection also be withdrawn.

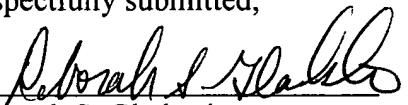
The Examiner has failed to set forth a prior art rejection of claims 3-5, and thus Applicants assume these claims are allowable. Nonetheless, these claims are allowable at least due to their respective dependencies.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 204552028900.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 
Deborah S. Gladstein
Registration No.: 43,636
MORRISON & FOERSTER LLP
1650 Tysons Blvd, Suite 300
McLean, Virginia 22102
703-760-7753